

# Having omalizumab injections for hives (chronic spontaneous urticaria)

Allergy and Immunology

Information for Patients

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## What is chronic spontaneous urticaria (CSU)?

Chronic spontaneous urticaria (CSU) is a skin condition that causes red, swollen, itchy and sometimes painful hives. It is described as spontaneous when symptoms are not triggered by an identified factor. Urticaria is defined as chronic when symptoms persist for 6 weeks or more.

## Why am I being treated with omalizumab?

Your hives have not responded to maximum treatment with antihistamines and other drugs, and you are still getting symptoms. Your doctor has advised that you have the drug omalizumab for the treatment of your hives.

## What does this treatment involve?

Omalizumab is given as injections. A course of treatment normally involves 6 or 12 appointments at 4 weekly intervals. These appointments will be at Leicester General Hospital. During this treatment you should continue your current medication unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

You will need to be able to commit to attending a Friday morning clinic every 4 weeks. At your first treatment of every course, you will need to stay with us for 2 hours after the injection has been given, so we can check you have no reactions before letting you go home. At your following appointments, you will only need to stay for 30 minutes after your injection.

We will plan all appointments from the start. Please arrange any holidays around the appointment dates you are given. We cannot give the injections more often than every 4 weeks, as this is not recommended.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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Your response to this treatment will be checked by your doctor, or specialist nurse, over the 6 month period. If you are not responding to this treatment it may be stopped early.

## Is this treatment safe?

Trials for omalizumab in the treatment of CSU have shown an excellent safety record.

Some patients do experience headache, swelling of the sinuses (sinusitis), aching joints, cold-like symptoms, and soreness at the injection site. A life-threatening allergic reaction is rare, however it is the reason why we ask you to stay with us for a short time after your injection.

This treatment is not recommended during pregnancy. It is your responsibility to use suitable contraception during your treatment. **If you become pregnant please let us know immediately.**

## How do we decide whether omalizumab is working?

We will ask you to complete questionnaires about your symptoms. We will use these to check how you are responding to treatment.

## Can I have further courses of treatment if I get symptoms again?

The treatment is stopped after 6 or 12 doses. A follow-up appointment is then made with your doctor, usually 2 months after your last injection. This break is an important part of the treatment plan. Patients have found symptoms are easier to control on normal antihistamines after a course of omalizumab. During the treatment break, take at least 1 antihistamine tablet a day, as prescribed. Keep enough supplies in case you need to increase your dose back up to 4 times per day (or to the maximum dose recommended for you), should your symptoms return.

If your symptoms return, please send 2 weeks of UAS7 scores and photos of your CSU via email to [csuimages@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:csuimages@uhl-tr.nhs.uk). We need this information from you as part of the national prescribing requirements for omalizumab.

A further course of treatment may be given depending on the outcome of your follow-up appointment.

## Who can I contact if I have any problems?

You can leave a message with the secretary for the Allergy and Immunology Nurse on 0116 258 6180 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm). Or you can contact your GP for advice if needed.

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